

has been closely identified with the growth and advancement of this pleasant and progressive community.

My association, over a great many years, with Rotary International has been one of the most enjoyable and most rewarding experiences of my life. I consider it my good fortune to have been affiliated with this world-wide organization of business and professional men, united in the ideal of service and believing that he profits most who serves best. I have been aware from the beginning, of course, that one of the aims of Rotary is the advancement of international understanding, good will and peace.

This far-flung influence of Rotary was impressed upon me sharply by my travels abroad earlier this year. Last spring, accompanied by the President of the University of Maryland and the Dean of University College, I was privileged to travel through France, Spain, Italy, and Germany, visiting and inspecting branches of our University which have been established there for the education of American service men and civilians who are stationed in these countries. In many of the hotels in which I stayed, I saw displayed in the lobbies the familiar emblems of Rotary International, and although I did not have the opportunity to attend their luncheons, it was comforting and reassuring to me to know that our great organization was there, performing the same valuable service to our friends of foreign nations that it performs here in the United States where Rotary had its birth fifty-eight years ago.

As business and professional men, you have a deep and abiding interest, I know, in the economic health and strength of the community in which you live, and today I should like to give you some thoughts and observations I have had regarding the economy of this fair region of our state. Let me say in the beginning that it is inspiring and encouraging to me to see the great effort that has been made here in Hagerstown, and in other parts of the area, toward self-rehabilitation and economic revitalization. The achievements we see around us here are a mark of the strong character and courage of the people who inhabit this region. I enjoyed reading a few months ago an excellent newspaper account of these achievements — an article on Hagerstown entitled "The City that Rid Itself of the Blue Ridge Mountain Blues."

Shortly after I was inaugurated as Governor of the State, a little more than five years ago, I received a great many letters, telephone calls and other messages acquainting me with the serious economic plight of these three westernmost counties of Maryland — Washington,